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In contemporary musicology, the study of professional terminology generated by musical art of the XX–XXI centuries belongs to topical issues. In this article, the subject of research was the term «New Complexity» – which entered professional musical vocabulary in the late 1980s and characterizes one of the brightest trends in the musical academic avant-garde. Studying the history of the term revealed the problems associated with its definition, as well as various approaches in its interpretation by composers and musicologists.

The article considers aesthetic, conceptual and compositional criteria as essential categories that characterize the term and the phenomenon of «New Complexity» itself. The problematic aspect of the «New Complexity» phenomenon outlined in the study allowed us to conclude that it requires the search for new terms that can more fully and accurately determine it. The term «Complexism», proposed by the German composer Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, and possibly having the prospect of replacing the term «New Complexity», is an alternative.

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